

**PARKS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Parks and Cultural Affairs Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on **August 17, 2005**.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Jay H. Schneiderman, Chairman
Leg. Lynne C. Nowick, Vice•Chairperson
Leg. Cameron Alden
Leg. Angie Carpenter
Leg. Jon Cooper (excused absence)
Leg. William J. Lindsay

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mea Knapp, Counsel to the Legislature
Alexandra Sullivan, Chief Deputy Clerk
Jill Moss, Budget Review Office
Ronald F. Foley, Commissioner of Parks
Charles Bender, Aide to PO's Office
Ben Zwirn, Assistant Deputy County Executive
Frank Tassone, Aide to Majority Leader
Eric Brown, Aide to Leg. Schneiderman
Greg Moran, Aide to PO's Office
Jill Moss, Budget Review Office
Kevin LaValle, Aide to Leg. Losquadro
Paul Perillie, Aide to Minority Caucus
Vito Minei, Director of Division of Environmental Quality
Ed Hogan, Aide to Leg. Nowick
Terry Pearsall, Aide to Leg. Lindsay
Warren Greene, Aide to Leg. Alden

Barbara LoMoriello, Aide to Leg. Cooper
Jacqueline Caputi, Assistant County Attorney

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Kraus, Court Stenographer

(THE MEETING WAS CONVENED AT 11:02)

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

I'd like to call the meeting of the Parks and Cultural Affairs Committee to order this 17th day of August 2005. If you all will rise and join us for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Angie Carpenter.

(SALUTATION)

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

It seems like every day we hear of another tragedy in Iraq with the war. And this morning on my way here listening to the radio I heard of a resident from Brentwood, a man named Jose Louis, 23•years old, I believe, who died, I believe, yesterday a soldier in the Iraq war. So, if we could just pause for a moment of silence in his memory and pray for the family of Jose Louis.

(MOMENT OF SILENCE)

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Thank you.

LEG. CARPENTER:

Mr. Chairman, what is so unfortunate is that I believe this is the fourth young man from the Brentwood community to have lost his life in the conflict.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Let me see if I have any cards. Do we have any yellow cards for this meeting? No, we don't. Okay. The Commissioner, though, had asked to speak on one or two items. So, at this point I'll bring Commissioner Foley forward. Thank you for your patience with our late start to this meeting, Commissioner. You have our ears.

COMMISSIONER FOLEY:

Mr. Chairman, Legislators. I just wanted to talk a little bit about a piece of legislation you have before you. It's 1923 proposing a dog run at Blydenburg and the associated changes to a number of other laws or rules that go with that. If you remember history of the Legislature several years ago a dog run was proposed and approved for Coindre Hall in Huntington Westneck Farm. And it was supposed to be a two-year pilot program. It went through extensive CEQ review and recommendations and changes to what the approved development would look like. And because it's a cooperative thing between the Town and the County, we still haven't turned a shovel full of dirt on that and it may be a long time.

And as you consider this I think you also have to understand, and some of them come from Legislator initiatives, some of them are just citizen requests, we're entertaining pressure to allow development of soccer complexes in our public parks, new rowing clubs or one club is already there and wants to expand by double; ball fields, skate parks, a number of things that are new to the traditions and philosophys of what I see as a Suffolk County Parks system. And that tradition is along the lines of •• whether it was conscious or not, the park system being a kind of passive woodsy/camping oriented system for people who wanted to get outdoors and enjoy the outdoors kind of unfettered in a way. So people look at some these open spaces that we maintain, which are informal activity fields and say, gee, that's a great site for some new development. They see it as under•used and we ought to put something there. And I think we have to have at some point a discussion about what you want the park system to be.

There's clearly a need to recognize that Suffolk County is changing from its rural history and its

rural past to a more suburban community. And that brings with it new kinds of citizens, more intense development. And they have needs that need to be addressed. Whether we do that in the County Parks system or not is something we ought to talk about.

Most of these ideas because the developable parkland is so small would displace some other activities. And I think we need to look carefully at that. In some cases it would increase neighborhood traffic to certain areas. All these things are considerations that need to be well thought out and examined before we venture off into these things. And I'm not saying this in opposition to these ideas because I don't necessarily oppose dealing with the needs of today's Long Island population, Suffolk County population. But I think we need to know what the impact is. And I think we need to make conscious decisions on where we're going with the system.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Commissioner, I believe there's a public hearing required. Let me just check with Counsel on this resolution. So, you might want to re•make some of these comments at the time of the public hearing so they're in the record. Is that correct, Counsel? So, we will be tabling this.

MS. KNAPP:

It's not eligible to be voted on in committee because a public hearing is scheduled for the full meeting.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Thank you, Counsel. Okay. We have a question for the Commissioner. Legislator Nowick.

COMMISSIONER FOLEY:

September 19th. That's the answer to your question, I think. Little Red School House, painting, September 19th. One way or another.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

I have a question, too. What's the answer?

LEG. NOWICK:

You have to understand I get a daily visit.

COMMISSIONER FOLEY:

I do understand.

LEG. NOWICK:

And now the latest is the dumping of cement balls in front of the house.

COMMISSIONER FOLEY:

We sent somebody up there yesterday to see what it is.

LEG. NOWICK:

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER FOLEY:

You know, as soon as we know about it, we'll deal with it. We don't have somebody up there every day, but we'll respond to any inquiries you have.

LEG. NOWICK:

What color are we painting it? Red?

COMMISSIONER FOLEY:

Striped. I presume •• it's the Little Red School. We'll probably say it'll stay red. We're consulting with our historic ••

LEG. NOWICK:

After I saw the color of the St. James General Store ••

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

And what's the answer to my question?

LEG. NOWICK:

Yellow mustard.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

You have to predict. Third House. So, we're on track; right? End of August?

COMMISSIONER FOLEY:

I haven't received anything different than that. That was my last information. And I believe it's still good.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Other questions for the Commissioner? Legislator Carpenter.

LEG. CARPENTER:

I don't know if anyone else brought this up, I'm sorry, I had to step out for a moment, but thank you for all of your efforts on behalf of the issue of trap and skeet. I got your letter and it seems like we're finally moving forward. So I thank you for that.

COMMISSIONER FOLEY:

We are •• we're negotiating a contract. And as required in the legislation cited in the letter, it will come before the Legislature for review and approval. We are marching down that road.

LEG. CARPENTER:

When do you think that might be?

COMMISSIONER FOLEY:

I think it's got to be within 90 days of his bid. I don't think it'll be much before that. There's a lot of complicated discussions going on about what limits development there and what doesn't. So we're working on it everyday.

LEG. CARPENTER:

Okay. So most assuredly it will be before the end of the year?

COMMISSIONER FOLEY:

Yes; has to be.

LEG. CARPENTER:

Has to be. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Other questions for the commissioner? I'd like to just note for the record that Legislator Cooper has been given an excused absence from this meeting for today.

I'm going to move right to the agenda.

TABLED PRIME

Resolution 1443•05, to establish an Ecology and Technology _Eco•Tech_ Park in Suffolk County which I don't know all that much about.

LEG. NOWICK:

You know what? I'm going to make a motion to table.

LEG. LINDSAY:

Surprising.

LEG. NOWICK:

Okay. Next.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

All right. And the sponsor's not here today to explain it. So, there's a motion to table by Legislator Nowick, a second by Legislator Alden. All in favor? Any opposed? Abstentions? Okay. **1443 is tabled. (Vote: 5•0•0•1. Legislator Cooper not present)**

1581.

LEG. NOWICK:

I'm going to make a motion to approve this.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

On which one?

LEG. NOWICK:

1581.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. **1581, linking County Park fees for Community Emergency Response Team Volunteers, Medical Reserve Corps Volunteers and Volunteers Police Services to park fees for senior citizens**

LEG. LINDSAY:

Maybe we should keep track of this. It's republican sponsored so it gets approved.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Well, no, not necessarily. Don't jump the gun here. I'm not sure it's getting approved. And police services to park fees. I'll make a motion to table that one.

LEG. ALDEN:

Second to tabling.

LEG. CARPENTER:

I know •• excuse me. In Finance, the sponsor of the resolution had asked for FRES •• he asked FRES Commissioner to send someone down today to talk about this because there were questions on the fiscal impact. Is there someone here from FRES that is ready to discuss this on behalf of the Commissioner? Bel?

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

There's been a motion and a second to table. But on the motion we will entertain discussion. And we'll bring you forth. You'll have to identify yourself for our record.

MS. PAGDANGANAN:

Belinda Pagdanganan, Director for Emergency Preparedness and FRES.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Spell your last name, please.

MS. PAGDANGANAN:

P•a•g•d•a•n•g•a•n•a•n.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. If you can comment on the fiscal impact.

MS. PAGDANGANAN:

I just wanted to speak very briefly about the Community Emergency Response Team Program. This is a program that is being run by the Department of Health Homeland Security and FEMA. And we encourage residents to volunteer to assist our emergency responders during disasters. These volunteers are trained on disaster preparedness, on fire safety, CPR and shelter operations. And right now we have about 60 volunteers who have completed the training. And we have about •• we expect another 60 to be trained in the next few months.

And with regards to the Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer, which is another group under this program, we have about 25 volunteers right now. So, all in all we have about 85 volunteers that have been •• or we expect to be a part of this program. If this Legislature or •• if this is approved in terms of the •• of the fiscal impact ••

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Can I ask how much time is involved in the training?

MS. PAGDANGANAN:

For the cert program it's 13 weeks or a total of 30 hours.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

30 hours of training?

MS. PAGDANGANAN:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

And then on a daily basis is there any particular time commitment or is it just during these emergency events?

MS. PAGDANGANAN:

It's only during an emergency that they're activated and they're called upon to come and volunteer their services.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

And is there a yearly requirement for additional training? Or is it just the first 30 hour training and then they continue to be certified?

MS. PAGDANGANAN:

It's initial training. And then what they do is to keep them up to speed with what they've been trained on, they get called on to do some table top drills and some, like, scenarios. And they are asked to volunteer during non-emergencies when we have, like, county run or like FRES run drills.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. And this is for Counsel, currently this privilege we might say that's for senior citizens is also extended to what? Firefighters volunteers or any other groups that are receiving that discount on camping fees and some of the other park fees?

MS. KNAPP:

I would have to do a little bit more thorough search. From memory I believe that it's active duty •• oh, the Commissioner's going to be better at it than I will. I believe it's active duty military personnel, seniors and firefighters; is that right?

COMMISSIONER FOLEY:

Well, I suggest look through the fee schedule here which I have taken to carrying with me all the time. Resident, handicapped, volunteer firefighters and ambulance personnel get a discount. Junior green key holders get a discount. Disabled veterans. Families of active deployed military. Not the military members themselves, not if they're not deployed. But the families of them. I think that's it. Disabled •• well, disabled veterans get a pass on things except for golf and camping.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

I'm just trying in my mind to rationalize because there's just so many volunteer groups within the County. There's ladies axillaries, you know, Red Cross and so many people volunteering. And obviously it's all very valued work. Where do we draw the line? And there ought to be some equivalency between those things. I'm not sure how much •• the time a firefighter puts in, but I think it's quite substantial. And I don't know •• if they have to be in good standing or can they join and immediately qualify for the discount.

COMMISSIONER FOLEY:

I think if they're qualified volunteer fireman with this certification, they're eligible for this. And this is just the reason that trustees have not passed this thing. And I think everyone would agree based on the numbers that Belinda has given that the fiscal impact is probably minimal at best. But nobody knows what else is out there.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

So, the trustees have not given an opinion on this yet?

COMMISSIONER FOLEY:

They have not. They tabled it.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Legislator Nowick.

LEG. NOWICK:

Just a quick question because I thought that we were going to try to figure out the fiscal impact. Let's assume •• how much does it cost to get into Smith Point Park? \$7.

COMMISSIONER FOLEY:

\$5 if you're a resident.

LEG. NOWICK:

\$5. So, if you were one of these discounted people, how much would it then cost?

COMMISSIONER FOLEY:

Let's see. I think this gives them •• well, you get in free during the week. It's the same as a senior citizen. They get in free weekdays. They pay the regular rate on weekends essentially.

LEG. NOWICK:

Okay. So, we're talking about 85 people. And say they •• 30 of them went to the beach. Okay, so, it's a minimal.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

It's minimal. The larger question is where do we draw the line? It may start to be less than minimal if we extend it to many, many other groups. I have a bill to extend it to all veterans; at least I'm co•sponsoring with Legislator Cooper.

MS. CAPUTI:

Legislator Schneiderman, can I just state for the record that that's what we wanted to say, what Ron just said, is that on this and 1581 •• 1736, rather •• this is 1581 •• the Parks Trustees haven't voted on to approve it. And that is required under the Charter before the Committee or the Legislature could approve these fees. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Thank you, Ms. Caputi. Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

Commissioner, when do we actually set the fees? Is that •• is it each year that we have a resolution that sets fees? Or is it every other year?

COMMISSIONER FOLEY:

No, there's not a set schedule for that. We re•print the fee schedule every year if there are any changes. We re•print it every year regardless. And the 2005 re•printing was just a reiteration of the 2004 fees. It's our hope that we would come before the Legislature and suggest some fee changes for next year consistent with putting a new reservation system in place. But we haven't gotten to the point of being ready to do that yet.

LEG. ALDEN:

Two reasons, then. Number one, I think that we have to take a broader view of what's going to

go happen here. If we do pass something like this, there's probably a whole bunch of other groups out there that would be similarly situated that would be eligible or we might want to make them eligible for it. And secondly, if we have the opportunity for next year, because if we pass this and it gets signed, by the time that they can, you know, put this or implement this, the season's done anyway. So, you're dragging it into the winter months or at least the early to late fall before this can could go into effect. So, I think we should take a broader view, look of what we'd want to accomplish in January and then maybe do a more comprehensive ••

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

You can't move it today anyway so ••

LEG. ALDEN:

•• more comprehensive type of •• and you can't move it because the Park Trustees have to ••

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Legislator Carpenter, I had you on my list.

LEG. CARPENTER:

I just wanted to confirm that that is, in fact, a requirement that the Park Trustees must vote on it before we can vote on it. Is it a recommendation or is it a requirement?

MS. CAPUTI:

No, it's a requirement under section ••

LEG. CARPENTER:

I asked our counsel if you don't mind.

MS. CAPUTI:

It's under section 28•3 A•4 of the Charter.

LEG. CARPENTER:

All right. Thank you.

MS. CAPUTI:

You're welcome.

MS. KNAPP:

We could, of course, change the Charter.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. So, I'll make a motion to table ••

LEG. CARPENTER:

For now.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

•• this resolution 1581. Second by Legislator Nowick. All in favor? Any opposed? **1581 is tabled. (Vote: 5•0•0•1. Legislator Cooper not present)**

1657, adopting local law to amend the composition of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Commission to ensure geographic diversity. Is there a motion?

LEG. ALDEN:

Bill, right now it's one to one. One and one. We're keeping track of what get's tabled.

LEG. LINDSAY:

I make a motion to table.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. The sponsor has asked for a tabling.

LEG. ALDEN:

I'll second that.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. All in favor? Okay. There's a motion by the sponsor, Legislator Lindsay to table 1657. It was seconded by Legislator Alden. All in favor of tabling? Any opposed? **1657 is tabled.**

(Vote: 5•0•0•1. Legislator Cooper not present)

1736, linking County park fees for veterans to park fees for seniors.

LEG. CARPENTER:

Trustees didn't vote on it yet. Table.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

And I'm actually co•sponsor on this. I'll make a motion to table, second by Legislator Nowick.

All in favor? **1736 is tabled. (Vote: 5•0•0•1. Legislator Cooper not present)**

Introductory Resolution 1859.

LEG. CARPENTER:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

There's a motion, **accepting mobile trailer for use in Suffolk County Park Police Child Safety Seat Program.**

LEG. ALDEN:

From who?

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Does it matter?

LEG. ALDEN:

Yeah, it matters.

LEG. NOWICK:

Why?

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

It's for the Suffolk County Park Police. It's a gift.

LEG. NOWICK:

The Research Foundation at SUNY, Stony Brook.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. There was a motion by Legislator Carpenter, second by Legislator Alden. All in favor? Any opposed? **1859 is approved. (Vote: 5•0•0•1. Legislator Cooper not present)**

1860.

LEG. CARPENTER:

Motion and co•sponsor, please.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

There's a motion to approve. **(1860) This is to apply for a grant from the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for the restoration of Sagtikos Manor.** A motion by Legislator Carpenter.

LEG. ALDEN:

Second.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

A second by Legislator Alden. All in favor? Any opposed? 1860 is approved. **(Vote: 5•0•0•1. Legislator Cooper not present)**

1861, applying for a grant from the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for the restoration of New Mill and Miller's House at Blydenburg County Park. There's a motion to approve by Legislator Nowick, second by Legislator Carpenter. All in favor? Any opposed? **1861 is approved. (Vote: 5•0•0•1. Legislator Cooper not present)**

1862, applying for a grant from New York Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for the restoration of Wereholm, Scully Estate County Park.

LEG. ALDEN:

Motion to approve.

LEG. CARPENTER:

Second.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Motion by Legislator Alden, second by Legislator Carpenter. All in favor? Any opposed? **1862 is approved. (Vote: 5•0•0•1. Legislator Cooper not present)**

1923, adopting a local law authorizing County Department of Parks Recreation and Conservation to construct a dog run at Blydenburg County Park, Town of Smithtown.

LEG. CARPENTER:

Motion to table for public hearing.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

There's a motion to table for public hearing by Legislator Alden, second by Legislator Nowick. All in favor? Any opposed? **1923 is tabled. (Vote: 5•0•0•1. Legislator Cooper not present)**

And motion to adjourn, second by Nowick. We are adjourned.

(THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 11:24 AM)

DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY